



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Spoken
3/18/13

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FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

Government Administration and Elections Committee

PUBLIC HEARING

Monday, March 18, 2013

Testimony - Representative Jack Hennessy

House Joint Resolution #3

Chairman Musto and Chairman Jutila and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, my name is Jack Hennessy and I represent the 127th district in Bridgeport. I thank the committee for allowing me to address you today.

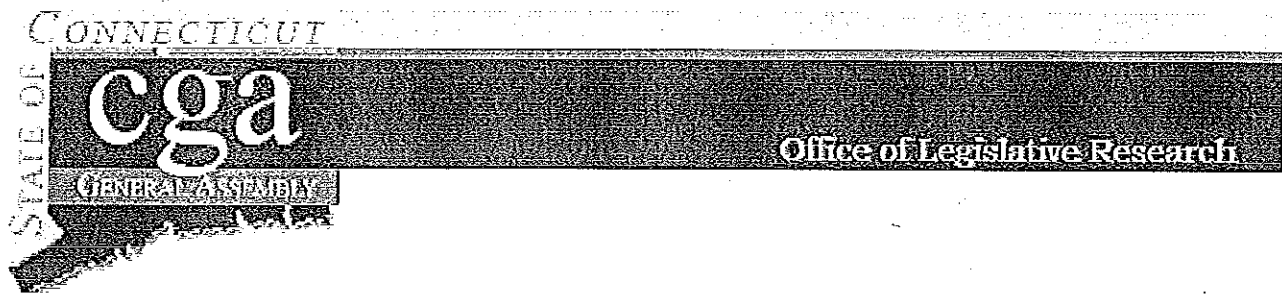
I am here to speak in support of House Joint Resolution 3, memorializing congress to propose an amendment to the United States constitution to reverse the United States Supreme Court's decision known as citizens united that extended First Amendment free speech protections to corporations.

This resolution goes hand-in-hand with a letter signed last year by a majority of Connecticut General Assembly members to the state's Congressional delegation urging support for a Constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court decision.

For government to truly represent the people, they need to have a voice, but when their voices are being drowned out by corporate cash, government no longer serves them. We must continue the effort to limit corporate influence over the electoral process. I am in full support of a Constitutional amendment and will continue with this effort until it is achieved.

The Citizens United decision effectively shuts out the people as campaign spending by outside groups has increased dramatically in 2012. Unlimited corporate money continues to undermine the principle of one person, one vote.

We have amended the constitution numerous times when decisions that had a detrimental impact to our democracy have been made in the past. We must do this once again and return the government to the people. I thank you for allowing me to address you today and urge the committees support.



You asked for information on (1) states that have passed resolutions asking Congress to propose and send to the states a constitutional amendment overturning the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United* and (2) the constitutional amendment process.

State Actions

According to the [United for the People website](#):

- seven state legislatures (California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Vermont) have passed resolutions calling on Congress to propose a constitutional amendment overturning *Citizens United*;
- voters in two states (Colorado and Montana) passed ballot initiatives calling on their congressional delegations to propose or support such an amendment; and
- a majority of the members in the Connecticut and Maryland state legislatures signed letters calling for such an amendment.

In addition, several states are currently considering such resolutions and around 400 cities and towns have passed similar measures.

Amending the Constitution

The authority to amend the Constitution of the United States is derived from Article V. The United for the People website has a [Q&A page](#) that provides the following information on the amendment process:

Question: What is the process for amending the Constitution?

Answer: An amendment has to be proposed either by a 2/3 vote of both houses of Congress, or else by a constitutional convention convened when the legislatures of 2/3 of the states so request. The amendment has to be ratified either by the legislatures of 3/4 of the states, or by conventions in 3/4 of the states, depending on which means of ratification Congress proposes. All of the amendments to the Constitution, of which there are now 27, were proposed by Congress, and all but one were ratified by state legislatures. The convention route has never been used for proposing an amendment, and was used only once for ratifying an amendment (the 21st, which eliminated Prohibition).

Background

United for the People appears to be a coalition of roughly 140 organizations, including Common Cause and Public Citizen, that support the campaign to overturn *Citizens United*. One of the main organizers appears to be People for the American Way.

Additional Resources

- People for the American Way
(<http://www.pfaw.org/GovernmentByThePeople>)
- ResolutionsWeek.org (<http://www.resolutionsweek.org/>)
- CorporationsAreNotPeople.com
(<http://corporationsarenotpeople.com>)